



Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative

Parent Education Work Group – January 28, 2005, 1:30 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Members Present: Elaine Davis, Barbara Gilkey, Randy Glenn, Suzann Hernandez, Traci Johnston, Pam Kahler, Nicholas Long, Martha Reeder, Lori Satterwhite, Carolene Thornton, and Paula C. Watson.

Guests: Marilyn Chambers (Hamburg School District) and Diane Vibhakar (State Coordinator, Study Circles). (Diane was invited to become a member of the group and she agreed to do so.)

Regrets: Christine Hickman and Linda Russell.

Self-introductions were made by everyone present. Martha informed the group that Susan Underwood, co-chair of the Family Support Work Group, had hoped to attend, but was unable to do so. The meeting was called to order by Barbara Gilkey who provided an update on the work of the committee to date. Barbara has met with two other work groups since this group last met: Family Support and Early Care and Education. She now has a better understanding of Tier Strategy and an appreciation of how the different groups fit together in one package.

Agenda Item #1: Study Circles – Diane Vibhakar and Marilyn Chambers

Discussion: Diane distributed a packet of materials related to the Arkansas Study Circles Project and provided an overview of a Study Circle Program. "The AR Study Circles Project began in 1998 to help the citizens of this state engage in dialogue and problem solving on educational issues. Since that time the project has worked throughout the state on issues such as student achievement, high school reform and family involvement. The project also works in areas such as early care and education, and race relations."

A copy of the PowerPoint presented by Diane is attached as a separate document to the minutes.

Marilyn spoke about her opportunity to participate in a Study Circle Project. She stated that the Hamburg School Program was a rewarding adventure.

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At first, she did not want to participate because she did not feel she had the time. There was a need for an e-mail network in the area related to her work, and she needed support for early childhood education. She felt that she was already doing a lot with early education, but she did not think that the people in Hamburg knew what they were about. She thought it might be a good time to get the word out and discuss what they were doing in the district.

Marilyn had four people volunteer to act as coordinators of work groups. They recruited recorders. At the first meeting, there were 26 people who attended. As a school district, they invited child care providers to attend. They used a gimmick: They arranged for some people to offer \$200 to participate in the Study Circle. They were able to get a lot of people that they had never had around the table before.

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Agenda Item #1, Continued: Study Circles – Diane Vibhakar and Marilyn Chambers

Discussion: The Hamburg group had two circles going for four different nights. They wanted to seek more funds for Early Childhood programs. They laughed together; they cried together. The meetings were held in a school cafeteria. There were mothers, fathers, preachers, teachers, employees of the departments of human services and health, as well as other professions represented. They came out with goals that included:

- ? Networking group that meets quarterly in Hamburg.
- ? Seeking Funds for 0-3 programs
- ? Advocacy group

Marilyn mentioned that children need to be in quality centers from birth. Developmental preparation needs to go on from birth. It makes a difference for school success.

Marilyn stated that the rewards were great. The high school principal is now using the study circles process over some issues that have arose. The Network group now meets quarterly in Hamburg. It is a by-product of the study circle. **(See Page 9 for Action Report.)**

Diane mentioned that \$300 was available to support the study circle site. She stated that Study Circles are time consuming, not necessarily expensive. Included in the packet there is a mock study circle information sheet, a one page sheet to get the project off the ground, two brochures, and a discussion guide.

There are facilitator and recorder six-hour trainings that they do not compromise. Cannot carve much time off the training. This is necessary. Study circle facilitating is a little different from regular facilitating. The recorder ensures that critical elements of what is said in the study circle is captured on paper.

Diane mentioned that she did not know much about early care before she started with the Hamburg project. Because of her work, she is now very aware and very concerned.

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Diane and Marilyn were thanked for their attendance at this meeting.

Results: Martha mentioned that study circles will take the pulse across Arkansas. This is a diverse state with different kinds of population groups. It is an important section of the systems grant. Diane has done an excellent job of putting the study circle system together. She commended Marilyn as the kind of person to take the ball and run.

The Study Circles Project has been charged by DHS to deliver ten study circles across the state. One of the things that Martha had hoped to report on was the study circle project, but this has not worked yet. The Study Circles Project has only delivered one site– Marilyn's. We are looking at potential sites for study circles. It will not be part of the DHS needs assessment this time. It is not just to fit numbers in the report. It is to take a snapshot of what the needs are across the state with real people.

There is a training on Monday, January 31, for facilitators in Springdale.

Sherry Jo McLemore, who is a member of this group and unable to be here this afternoon, wanted to share that the Children's Trust Fund has a network that may be able to deliver study circles. They have some strong coalitions in some cities like Texarkana. Sherry Jo will be a good resource person to help on this project.

Other names were put forth. Mary Wilbur has not said anything definitely, but she is interested. They have a network in her area. Tanya Russell has suggested that Kim Star in Conway might be a good contact person. Cooperative education may have a statewide group. Some of them may have already received training.

There is a group in the Eastern Part of the State. Sherry Jo may know someone in Pulaski County that is interested. Stephanie Sikora, who works in the Delta may be a good contact.

TASKS: Barbara requested that Diane send her a copy of the brochure related to parent involvement in the school. This group should consider Study Circle information and decide what should be done about it.

Agenda Item #1, Continued: Study Circles – Diane Vibhakar and Marilyn Chambers

Result: The Helena School District also has some people trained. Diane will provide the names of some contacts in that district. There's a group in Siloam that may be interested.

Carolene provided an update on the Springdale Study Circles Project. They currently have 16 people signed up but expect more for the training. They are hoping to get a variety of sites: Fayetteville (English and Spanish), Rogers, Bentonville, Siloam Springs, a rural group. They would like several groups in Springdale and a Spanish-speaking one in Benton County as well.

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Result: They are also hoping to develop an action plan. On Monday, they hope to narrow down and make some decisions.

Carolene has met with several administrators in the area to talk about how important it is to have met with the chamber, businesses, etc., trying to get their support. It is a campaign and focusing a lot of energy on getting the child ready for school. Businesses are beginning to realize that we need better schools to attract better workers for companies. A lot of chambers are very familiar with study circles

Agenda Item #2: Parent Education Certification/Credentialing

Discussion: It was reported that the National Council on Family Relations sponsors a certification program called the Certified Family Life Educator. The issue has not taken off as they thought it would. There are people coming from various disciplines, people with all types of education, and it covers a lot. It is very broad. A lot of places are struggling with educating parents and are not successful with it.

Dr. Long reported that there are licensed educators in Minnesota. They want parent educators to be better paid. There are people who may need certification.

Barbara stated that Massachusetts Institute of Technology has a Family Resource Center. This group along with the National Council on Family Relations relates to The Parenting Education Network. The Network is the result of nearly two years of meetings and discussions by an ad hoc group of national leaders in parenting education and family support. The Parenting Education Network is developing a national professional organization to affirm and advance the work of parenting practitioners and the field of parenting education.

Because professional work related to parenting is currently embedded in a number of organizations and fields, the Network has two goals. First, it will support and supplement the work of existing organization involved in parenting education through a series of special working relationships beginning with the National Council on Family Relations and the Family Resource Coalition.

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Second, it will provide a structure within which parenting, practitioners and researches from a wide range of back-grounds can create a sense of identity, build a body of knowledge, and address the pressing professional issues that transcend disciplinary boundaries. By so doing, the network will seek to strengthen significantly the ability of parenting professionals to contribute to the well-being of parents, children, and families.

Martha distributed information about the Missouri Family Development Training and Credentialing Program that is sponsored by the Children's Trust Fund.

The Family Development Training and Credentialing (FDC) Program is a "training program for frontline workers designed to reorient human service practice to the family support approach. It offers a research-based, comprehensive curriculum in family support principles, which significantly improves the ability of frontline workers to help the families and individuals they work with to set and reach their own goals. After successful completion of 90 classroom hours of instruction, a standardized exam, and portfolio development under the guidance of a community-based field advisor, workers receive a credential issued by the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) Family Studies Program.

California has taken the course content and fused it with the child development degree. This allows students in the child development track to receive a minor in family support/parent education.

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Agenda Item #2, Continued: Parent Education Certification/Credentialing

The program administrator for the Family Development Credential is Dr. Deborah K. Smith. She is a sociology professor in the Family Studies Department of UMKC. UMKC is the credentialing agent for the program. A conference call was arranged with Dr. Smith

Kansas did not want to start from scratch so they affiliated with the Missouri office. They are serving a large number of people, helping them to prepare in this area, but the Kansas program is a much smaller program than Missouri.

The central office receives \$300. The tuition cost is around \$1200. It is a 90-hour training that provides seven college credits. In Missouri the Children's Trust Fund has covered the tuition for family service workers. Head Start has funded scholarships for their workers. Various areas around the state have experienced a great deal of success by looking for local foundation dollars to fund the cost of tuition.

If we are interested in the program, we can do the stand alone option or enter into an agreement with Missouri. Dr. Smith offered to meet with the parent education group if we want to pursue further. Martha further stated that we would probably want to combine a meeting with the family support group and invite some early care and education people to attend.

Dr. Long is concerned about the cost of the program.

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Martha indicated that Dr. Smith informed her that the next facilitator training is February 10. Someone can be sent to observe. It would cost \$500 to send someone for the training, plus the cost of meals and lodging. They are about to begin a training in March in West Plains, Missouri, close to the Arkansas border. If someone in that part of Arkansas is interested in participating in or observing, we can look into it.

The syllabus for the training program is included in the handouts that were on the table. A detailed syllabus can be found on the web site,
www.fscouncil.org/FDC/comptetencies.html

The web site for the Missouri Family Development Training and Credentialing Program is:
www.umkc.edu/mofdc/support.

Results: Informally, it was agreed to invite Dr. Smith to meet with our group to learn more about the credentialing program. The expenses for doing so are not known. This will be scheduled around a meeting time, with perhaps Dr. Smith in the morning and a regular meeting held in the afternoon.

TASKS: Dr. Smith to be invited to meet with the Parent Education Work Group.

Agenda Item #3: Strengthening Families and Work Group Updates

Discussion: Martha distributed a short summary sheet about what is happening in other groups. This short synopsis of all the work groups is on the following page. Additional comments included:

Strengthening Families

Sherry Jo McLemore and Martha are listed as state directors of the project. There are eight objectives in the submitted plan. One relates specifically to this group– the Resource Tool Kit. We are seeking technical assistance in the development of the tool. They will help the tool to become a reality. The tool kit project has been tabled until we meet with the strengthening families representatives. The steering committee for AECCS will be combined with the steering committee for Strengthening Families.

Lynn Kagan wrote the position paper for Strengthening Families. She lists eight pieces of the system. She asked the question, “Are we building a system or tweaking pieces of the infrastructure. Eight minus one equals zero. If any piece is not working, there is no system.

Early Care and Education Work Group

The tier quality system is going to happen. It is very successful in other states. Judy Collins says that the train has already rolled out of the station. States are getting on board. Arkansas already has a tier system with two steps. There is a huge distance between the two (basic and quality). In the proposed system, there will be four or five steps. One of the things that Early Care has identified targets this group specifically. They want this group to say what their priorities are related to quality. They want the information in specific terms. Early Care will decide where the information should be placed in the system. It is going to happen. This is Parent Education's chance to plug into the system. This is a system-wide piece.

Medical Home Work Group

The planning grant does not fund activities. It funds us to get together to work on the grant. The CATCH grant is being written to help them get their work done. If it is funded, they will produce a training module that

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will take the priorities they will list, four or five “hitting” priorities, and develop a training module that can be plugged into the system.

It will probably take the form of a video with some training piece to go along with it. It will first be used with the ABC centers.

Family Support Work Group

The Family Support group wants Parent Education's help on the resource directory. They have come up with a starting point. You should visit the Family Support Community web site in Kansas City, Missouri. <http://fslc-kc.org>. This links in all these different resources in the Kansas City area.

The Family Support groups is interested in establishing a web site in Arkansas. Then, they want this group to log on to the ARMI S web site (www.araccess.org) and pull down various agencies. Look at it from the prospective of the clients you serve. Look at what can be changed or added. Look to find missing pieces or organizations. Report your findings back to the AECCS office or send the information to Jackie Gorton and Susan Underwood. There will be a public awareness piece and something to inform providers of the site.

Family Support needs your cooperation on this matter. Please reply before February 11 to this group or as quickly as you can. Help identify groups that are missing. You can contact the group or contact us, and we will contact the agencies. Each agency has to log in their own information and keep it updated.

The hope is that by next Fall the web site will be up and running. The web site will not solve all problems, but we need to begin somewhere.

Social-Emotional Health Work Group

This group is looking at screening and assessment. Dr. Patti Bokony sent over a checklist from the Family Foundation Project. This is a checklist for Head Start staff to use to self-assess their level of involvement with parents as part of the training on Connecting with Families. She would like us to review and get back to her with your thoughts as soon as possible.

Dr. Patti Bokony: 501-660-7526. E-mail: BokonyPattiA@uams.edu. (See Page 10 for checklist.)

Tasks found on Page 7.

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Work Group Updates

Strengthening Families State Pilot Project – Arkansas was chosen as one of seven states that will participate in a state network – working to infuse the concepts of this research-based project across states. It is focused on training child care providers to recognize risk factors in the children that they serve, and intervene with families before situations escalate. All printed materials about the initiative can be found at the following link: http://www.cssp.org/doris_duke/resources.html. You can examine the proposed state plan for *Strengthening Families* to see what the possibilities may be for reinforcing goals of several AECCS work groups.

Early Care & Ed meeting with Eva Carter and Judy Collins from NCCIC – These two women from the National Child Care Information Center shared with the Early Care & Ed work group, along with representation from other work group on December 17. You can examine the minutes from that meeting to see a synopsis of what they shared – essentially that tiered strategies are being put into place across the United States (<http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare/12-17-04%20Minutes.pdf>). What we need to realize is that Arkansas already has a tiered system of sorts. We have two levels at this time: licensing compliance and quality approval. The tiered system that is being developed will have the advantage of offering a path for moving from compliance to graduated degrees of quality. Contact for this group: sreifeiss@arkedu.k12.ar.us and vshelby@paragould.k12.ar.us

Medical Homes Work Group – This group is working to condense a list of twelve priorities that were introduced to them by Monica Miller (a Head Start health coordinator for Van Buren) for ways that child care can support the concept of the medical home. They are working to condense these into some hard-hitting and concise recommendations for the tiered strategies. An opportunity presented itself for a CATCH grant from the AAP to possibly fund a training module that can reinforce these priorities. Dr. Gil Buchanan agreed to sponsor this grant that, if funded will produce a training module that can then be plugged in to existing trainings. Contact for this group: rnugent@healthyarkansas.com

Family Support Work Group – This group is working on several projects. They are working on the tool kit that we discussed in previous meetings. If you would like more information on this, see the state plan for *SFI*. They are also considering establishing a web site that will link to Arkansas Access (<http://www.araccess.org/>). They have printed out a version of all the agencies that are listed at the current time. They have requested that other groups help them to identify missing pieces, so that they can contact these entities and request that they register their information. They have also requested that you log on to the site, and look at it from the perspective of your clients. Use the search engine, and make some observations about how user-friendly it is. If you have any suggestions for ways that the drop down menus could be added to, etc. Susan Underwood feels that the service provider (ARMIS) is very open to suggestions for making the site work better. Contact for this group: sunderwood@arkedu.k12.ar.us and jgorton@healthyarkansas.com

Parent Education Work Group – This group has several projects also that they are currently involved in. Study Circles were supposed to be delivered last fall, but circumstances prevented that. They are in the process of trying to help this process along. Also, in connection with Act 603, they are considering the development of a parenting credential that would be offered to persons that work with families/children. We are in touch with the program in Missouri that offers a Family Development Credential. If you would like more information about this, take a look at their web site: <http://www.umkc.edu/mofdc/> Contact for this group: cthorno@jtlshop.jonesnet.org and gilkeybj@archildrens.org

Social Emotional Work Group – The primary project this group is currently working on is to study screening and assessment information that they may choose to recommend as a statewide universal social-emotional assessment. Several of the assessments currently being studied may be viewed at the website: <http://www.dbpedcs.org/> Members of this group are also serving on the sub-group looking at a tool kit that targets social-emotional, and physical needs of children and families. Contact for this group: cohenbrucem@uams.edu and bokonypattia@uams.edu

Agenda Item #3, Continued: Strengthening Families and Work Group Updates

TASKS: Visit Kansas City web site: <http://fslc-kc.org>.

Visit ARMI S web site: www.araccess.org. Determine if site is user friendly from your perspective and the perspective of your clients. Make suggestions for altering and improving to Susan Underwood and Jackie Gorton. Look at agencies/organizations represented and help determine what groups are missing. Your help is needed to identify entities that need to be on the site.

Review the Family Foundation Project sheet (See Page 10 for checklist.). Contact Patti Bokony as soon as possible with your thoughts about this checklist: (BokonyPattiA@uams.edu).

Agenda Item #4: Reapplication of Planning Grant

Discussion: Reapplication of the planning grant for the next cycle is imminent. As part of the re-application procedure for extending the planning grant, a report must be made on the status of each goal for all the work groups. Any day now we may receive an e-mail stating that the re-application is due within the week. We need all the information related to our plan on hand.

Related to each goal, we must provide answers to three questions:

- ? What is already in place to accomplish this goal?
- ? What additional activities can be done to help accomplish the desired outcome?
- ? What system is in place to evaluate the effectiveness of programs, initiatives, and activities (did we do what we said we would do)?

The Early Care and Education Work Group worked through one goal (Goals #3) and it was distributed as an example.

We need to have members of the Parent Education Work Group answer the three questions for each goal. A sheet has been developed that can be used for each goal. This

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information will be sent out and members will be asked to reply to as many goals as they are able. The ECE goal will be sent as an example, along with the question sheets for each goal for Parent Education .

During the meeting, it was decided that goals 3 and 4 could be combined

Result: A few members agreed to take a leadership role or were volunteered to gather the information for various goals.

Goal 1. The Center for Effective Parenting (Springdale and Little Rock)

Goal 2-3 (3 and 4 combined to become Goal 3). Elaine Davis, Traci Johnston, and Christine Hickman

Goal 4 (formerly Goal 5).
Sherry Jo McLemore, Barbara Gilkey, and Nick Long.

This does not let the other members of the work group off the hook. They are asked to reply to any or all of the goals. The information is needed by February 18 in order for Martha to collate the information before the meeting.

TASKS: Martha will send out the template with goals and questions as soon as possible for reply by the group on or before February 18. (The Early Care and Education sample goal will be sent as an example.) She will then compile the information for the next meeting.

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Agenda Item #5: Miscellaneous – Next Meeting Date - Adjournment

Discussion: A sheet was distributed on the DCCECE Community Mental Health Centers Partnership with Early Childhood Programs – Project Update, January, 2005.

Martha reminded the group to check the web site frequently. There is a link on site to the co-chairs in case you want to contact another group. There is a two-month calendar listing meeting dates for other groups. You are invited to meetings with the other groups and to read their minutes on the web site. We have had some valuable insights when people have attended other work groups.

Meeting dates were discussed for February and March. It was decided that the next meeting would be February 25, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Traci will check on a meeting site and get back to Paula.

Result: Next Meeting Date–

Date: February 25, 2005

Time: 10 a.m. to 12 Noon

**Place: University of Arkansas
Cooperative Extension Services
State Office
2301 South University
Little Rock, AR**

A map with directions will be attached to the reminder meeting notice.

Hamburg School District Study Circles Project
Early Childhood Education
October 4, 5, 11, 12, 2004
Hamburg Junior High School Cafeteria

Actions Report

The following actions to develop were voted on at the Action Forum on October 12:

1. Start a Networking Group for all the childcare providers in the Hamburg attendance zones.

The group will meet quarterly and discuss current issues, quality, and curriculum. (We have never before been able to get all the private providers around the table to discuss quality. The Study Circle process has gotten them involved and interested in a non-threatening environment. A lot of trust has been formed between the school district and private providers.) A Fun Day for all childcare providers, their clients, and families will be held in the spring in conjunction with Children's Week.

2. Seek funding for a 0-3 programs (Parents As Teachers). (Because of the emphasis on brain research and the importance of early learning, the group realizes the part an early program plays in school success. We have a good HIPPY program, but there is a gap for the youngest child.)

3. Parents, community leaders, and educators have agreed to form an Advocacy Group to seek funding for early childhood. (The group bonded because of the total commitment to Early Childhood.)

4. Other Activities to pursue include: Library Accessibility; Parent Encouragement through brochures, tips, classes and programs; Enrichment activities for children including foreign language at an early age.

This has been one of the most rewarding projects that I have done in many years. We had people from all races, social statuses, and ages together discussing an important issue in a non-threatening environment. Networks and bonds were formed that would not have been formed if this project had not been developed. I have been amazed that the participants stuck with the process, attending each session and remained so interested in the discussions. Even though it took a lot of effort, I would do this again. Thanks for the opportunity.
Marilyn Chambers

Family Foundation Project

Parent Involvement

- ☐ I ask parents what they would like out of the program before telling them what the program does.
- ☐ I schedule parent/ teacher meetings at times and places convenient for the family.
- ☐ I include both Fathers and Mothers.
- ☐ I facilitate a parent/child interaction play group.
- ☐ I invite parents into the classroom to play with their child.
- ☐ I send home daily notes to mothers and fathers.
- ☐ I organize special occasions to get families involved in parties, holidays etc.
- ☐ I provide opportunities for parent as classroom observer/volunteer or to help out from home.
- ☐ I use photographs to link school and home.
- ☐ I emphasize open-door policy.
- ☐ I implement a parent involvement curriculum.
- ☐ I offer parenting classes or provide information about classes offered in the community.
- ☐ I listen to parents more than "tell" parents.
- ☐ I develop individualized plans together with parents to allow parents to identify their child and families' strengths and needs.